2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

as well, but the people make it and apply it themselves, without resorting to any medicine-man or -woman. The shells are found in the desert, so that when one is worn out it is not difficult to get a fresh supply. The stones used are also said to come from the desert.

A certain sheikh, who combined the profession of magician with that of a doctor, told me that he often prescribed the following cure for inflammation of the eyes. Some lotus-leaves are pounded in a mortar and then mixed with goat's milk. The eyelids are bathed with this preparation two or three times a day, when all the fever disappears, and the eyes soon recover. A remedy of his for an eye that is injured from a blow is to take some palm-leaves and, after thoroughly washing them, put them in a mortar and crush the juice out with a pestle. Some salt is mixed with this juice and the mixture dropped on to the injured eye. Three applications, so he says, effect a cure. The woman eye-doctor last mentioned has a different cure for an eye injured by violence. She rubs her shell with the stone as before, and, mixing the liquid with molasses, bathes the eye with this preparation.

If a man is suffering from sore or watery eyes he must get two drams of opium and two drams of the seeds of *er-rashād* (nasturtium). These he must grind up together and mix with the white of an egg. Placing the preparation upon a piece of cotton material, he applies it to his eye or eyes. This is the prescription of a Coptic magician, who says that it is an absolute cure.

The peasants quite realize the value of massage, and both a male and a female exponent of the art are to be found in many of the villages. Their services are employed in obstinate cases of constipation as well as for the curing of pain in the back and limbs. A man or woman who is suffering from a pain in the back is sometimes treated in the following way. The 'doctor' makes his patient lie on the ground, face downward, and ties his ankles together with a rope, while with another rope his hands are tied behind his back. The 'doctor' then places his foot on the exact spot in the patient's back where he feels the pain, and, grasping with both hands the ends of the ropes which tie the man's hands and ankles, draws them upward, his foot pressing down the spine. Probably a crack will soon be heard, or the patient himself will feel that something has gone into place again in his back, and he will be cured. A woman attends

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

members of her own sex, and gives them the same somewhat drastic treatment.

A headache is sometimes cured in the following way. The magician in his capacity as medicine-man writes out a charm, which is hung on the patient's head over the spot where the pain is greatest. The charm must be written in a circle, and is, of course, in Arabic. Fig. 123 is an exact copy, only transliterated.

Sīdī Aḥmed el-Bedawī is one of the most celebrated sheikhs in Egypt. His tomb is at Ṭanṭa, where a great festival is held in his honour every year.

The following is a prescription for a disordered spleen. The magician fetches leaves of *el-atl* (tamarisk), pours red vinegar on them, and boils this mixture on the fire, afterward pressing it through a sieve. The patient must drink a coffee-cup of this medicine early in the morning, repeating the dose for seven days, during which time he must eat no solid food, but should drink soup made by boiling a fowl.

FIG. 123. CHARM TO CURE A HEADACHE

Distention of the stomach is a very common complaint among the peasants, due, of course, to acute indigestion. In some parts of Egypt a boiled crow is prescribed as a cure for this complaint, and the patient, I am told, quickly experiences relief after eating this most repulsive food. Another more reasonable cure is prescribed by a medicine-man of my acquaintance. A small quantity of flour is mixed with a little yeast early in the morning; this must be left to rise in the sun till mid-day, when sufficient water is mixed with it to form a liquid. Soon after taking some of this preparation the patient must drink some soup made by boiling a fowl. The bowels will then act, and relief be soon experienced.

If a woman is suffering from prolonged labour, and birth is difficult, her relatives will call in the aid of a magician. He writes two charms, in the form of two magic squares, on two separate pieces of paper. One square is suspended by a string from the woman's waist, so that the inscribed paper hangs over her left

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

THE VILLAGE MEDICINE-MAN

The village barber is employed as surgeon by the peasants for most small operations. One of his specialities is blood-letting, which is regarded as a cure for persistent headache. The barber first shaves away the hair adjacent to the forehead, upon which he then makes a series of vertical cuts, extending from temple to

FIG. 127. THE BUTCHER PRETENDING TO CUT THE BOY'S THROAT TO CURE HIM OF HUSKINESS

temple. The patient bends over a basin in which the blood is caught, and when the bleeding has continued for two or three minutes the barber sponges the forehead with cold water, till the blood ceases to flow (Fig. 128). The peasants show wonderful pluck when undergoing this operation, which must be a very painful one, but they have great faith in the efficacy of this cure. The operation is probably highly beneficial in a hot country like Egypt, as it keeps the people from getting too full-blooded.

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR10

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THE FELLÂHÎN OF UPPER EGYPT

Coptic priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims

to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

[Text continued on page 216]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5
Graeco-Roman Egypt MR4

or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarîneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD
After A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *ʻfy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ḫḏw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.
[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.
[3] ii, 84.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Ancient Egypt MR5

associated in ancient than they are in modern Egypt, as is evident from Dr A. H. Gardiner's illuminating article, "Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt."[1] It is interesting to note also that the two titles *swnw*, 'physician,' and *sˁw*, 'amulet-man'—*i.e.*, 'maker' or 'purveyor of amulets'—are borne more than once by the same person.[2]

The necessity for a magician's being clean (p. 186) is strongly emphasized in ancient Egyptian magical texts.[3]

The modern belief that a person can be possessed by an *'afrīt* (pp. 231 f.) or a sheikh (pp. 187, 197 ff.) finds an ancient parallel in the tale of *The Daughter of the Prince of Bakhtan and the Possessing Spirit*.[4] The peacemaking feast held by people who have appeased the possessing sheikh (pp. 186, 199 f.) is likewise parallelled in the same story, where we are told [5] that the spirit, while agreeing to leave the princess, demanded that a feast-day be celebrated with him and with the chief of Bakhtan, a demand that was carried out.

The magical ceremony described on p. 188 began with the sweeping of the ground and the sprinkling of water.[6] In ancient Egypt the priest, before beginning the toilet episodes of the temple liturgy, swept the floor of the sanctuary with a cloth.[7] As the king (the high-priest *par excellence*) is shown in a relief in the temple of Derr [8] holding a ewer as well as the cloth used for sweeping the floor, it is highly probable that the priest often sprinkled the floor as well as swept it. It was certainly the custom to sprinkle water while the floor of a house was being swept, as we learn from a wall-painting found by Professor Petrie at el-'Amarneh.[9] With regard to the lighting of a fire and the burning of a hoopoo's feathers (p. 188), it should be pointed out that the ancient magicians also burned various strange substances while pronouncing their spells.[10]

[1] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. xxxix (1917), pp. 31 ff.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 33.
[3] A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[4] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 172 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iii, pp. 188 ff.
[5] J. H. Breasted, *op. cit.*, § 444.
[6] *Cf.* A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, p. 482.
[7] A. M. Blackman, "Worship (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 778.
[8] A. M. Blackman, *The Temple of Derr* (Cairo, 1913), Pl. LXIV, left.
[9] W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el Amarna* (London, 1894), Pl. V.
[10] F. Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London, 1904), pp. 37 ff.

743 Special hospitals have been established to fight against
744 the three diseases in every *bandar*, or provincial capital.
164 These, however, can only treat patients from the immediate neighbourhood. It is difficult for others to leave their villages, in which there are no hospital facilities. If they all went to the *markaz*, the Government doctor and his pharmacy would be overwhelmed.

You may tell a sick man that he has no excuse. The towns are full of hospitals; there is free medicine at the dispensaries, and any number of doctors available.

"Yes", he will reply, "but there is no doctor in my village. And if there were, I could not afford to pay him any more than to buy medicine. As for going away to hospital, I cannot leave my wife and children. And how should I live while I am away? Where should I find money to pay for my food and lodging? I prefer to trust in Providence" (*).

A friend of the author's who is an *omda* gives a different view. "In the old days a sick fellah had to ride for three hours on donkey-back to get to hospital, whatever his condition. Now we have built a free dispensary in the village itself. A doctor comes four times a week, and when he is away he can be called by telephone. In this way treatment has become easier."

759 If the fellaheen go to the barber for treatment (till
744 they die of it), this is because he is the only available practi-
743 tioner, just as the money-lender is the only available source of loans. The proof is that, when the mobile medical services arrive in a village, the fellaheen come eagerly for help and submit with unflinching confidence to any sort of treatment.

743 Take for example the travelling hospital at Tahta. The
744 Ministry of Public Health rented a site for six months, and
164 tents were set up by the Department of Epidemic Diseases. Everything was clean. Before the opening day a publicity campaign was carried out in the surrounding villages, and a ceremonial opening was arranged. One doctor and six assistants were at the disposal of the patients, who were treated free. The average attendance was eighty a day, of whom twenty-five had hookworm and only three had bilharzia (this was Upper Egypt). But these splendid efforts on the part of the Ministry of Public Health are no more than a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately, the fellah's

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

747 361 291 431 expense, which amounts to about L.E. 70. These *gallabiyas* are not distributed anyhow, but fitted individually by the *nâzer's* wife, according to height and taste. At the Bairam festival there is a general distribution of meat, four pounds to a person, which costs about L.E. 40. Fat is also given to those who have no *gamoossa*. The fruit crop of the orchard is shared out at intervals. Whenever a child is born, a set of baby-clothes is provided.

[426] When a fellah gets into debt, the *nâzer* advances him what he needs, without any trickery. The man pays it off by days of work.

[312 515] Drinking-water is supplied to all from a pump at the entrance to the *'ezba*. A dozen lavatories and two shower-baths have been set up near the mosque.

This beautiful mosque, built by the Christian landowner, who also provides for an *imam*, brings together the menfolk [346 794] of the *'ezba* and its surroundings. A *kuttab* was attached to it, but this has been closed since the opening of an *ilzamiya* school in the next village.

[755 743] Fellaheen who go sick are cared for by the *nâzer*, who has by practice become something of a doctor, or sent to the Government doctor at Mit Ghamr. The wife of this kindly manager, when she was there, used to take care of the people herself, wash their eyes, and give them clothes and good habits too. For twenty-four years she stood at her husband's side.

[152 181] When she died, they showed that fellaheen are not incapable of gratitude. They discovered by childish tricks, in spite of efforts to keep the truth from them, that she was seriously ill in Cairo. Thirty of them piled into a couple of taxis and drove off to the hospital. It was like a public demonstration, people said. Later, when they saw the *nâzer* and his children coming back in mourning from the cemetery, their grief was as spontaneous as it was general.

This mother left her daughter an example to follow. And follow it she does, with her gentleness and good temper and her mastery of Arabic. It is easy to see how much they love her, those unloved peasants.

This experiment in social justice has not made either the owner or the *nâzer* any the poorer. The estate is one of the most productive in Egypt, and all its products have won prizes at agricultural exhibitions.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

harm, this stone rescues one from harm after one has fallen. Both in the case of a confined woman, and also of those afflicted with purulent ophthalmia, it is rubbed and its water drunk.[1] Our experience is that the harm done by the *kabbās* is greater than that done by the rest of its brethren which are strung with it on the cord of absurdities and vanities, because the harm of these is limited to their delaying the patient from calling in a doctor; but *it* is harmful on account of its rubbing upon the *maḥār* (or mother of pearl shell which is employed), as a result of which hard particles fly off which do not agree with the ailing eye, for when they are put into it the cornea becomes ulcerated. As is obvious, there is extreme danger in this.

V

TREATMENT FOR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH LEPROSY AND SYPHILIS

SELDOM do the people of the villages and the remote places treat themselves properly for the diseases which trouble them. In consequence you see among them people afflicted with leprosy, syphilis and elephantiasis. When these diseases sorely oppress them, they go off to the village of Balkamūna in the Gharbīya Province, where there is to be found a man famous in all the provinces of Lower Egypt, named Al-Ḥāgg Aḥmed. They complain to him of their pain. He immediately uncovers the patient, splits the flesh of his back and extracts from it pieces of the muscles or sinews. He then sprinkles over the wound certain powders, the best known of which is blue

[1] [This last statement requires some elucidation. The *ḥagar-al-kabbās* is a small stone which is rubbed on a mother-of-pearl shell (*maḥāra*) into which drops of water from a *ḥulla*, or earthenware jar, are let fall. This water becomes whitish after a little, and is then drunk by the patient, or in the case of eye-disease, as mentioned above, it is used as an eye-lotion. Hence the injury done by the particles of the shell to the cornea. Miss W. S. Blackman in her book, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt* (p. 203) mentions this "cure" and gives an interesting photographic record. She asserts, however, that it is called *ḥagar el-ṭarfā* (stone of the tamarisk). Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

tutty (sulphate of copper), the very thing which hastens the destruction of the patient. Do not enquire about the wealth of this quack. I have been informed on good authority that he died last year leaving 35 feddāns [or acres] of very rich and extremely fertile land [p. 17], as well as jewelry to the amount of £800 worth, in spite of the fact that a few years previously he did not possess a thread or a date stone. His practice has been inherited by his eldest son, who even to-day continues to disseminate errors and absurdities among the foolish natives.

For those who are leprous they use a recipe very well-known among the " old women " from ancient times. It is (as follows) to eat every morning for ten days the heads of scorpions, dried over the fire. Then the patient will be cured—if Allah permits it—or else he will perish at the hands of the minions of Satan the Accursed.

There is no doubt that syphilis, leprosy, and elephantiasis are among the most grievous diseases before which many physicians stand abashed. Accordingly it is necessary that those so diseased should make haste to present themselves before a skilled physician, because the drugs which may effect a cure are not easily procurable in the villages. In any case one should employ for syphilis, in the first stages, compounds of mercury ; and, in the second, iodide of potassium and other compounds. As for leprosy, the cure of it is entrusted to the future. In the case of elephantiasis there is no other way but to call in a surgeon.

VI

RĪḤ AL-MASH'ŪMĀT

This word is made to embrace piles and dysentery. Some people claim [p. 18] that they have been endowed with the faculty of rooting out these diseases. Such a person is a woman in the neighbourhood of Farnawī, one of the villages in the district of Shubrakhīt. When anyone suffering from relaxation

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

comes to her, and he has taken it into his head that he is 757
suffering from piles, he offers her whatever money fate has bestowed on him, and she requites him with an "operation," of which the following is a description. She takes between the tips of her fingers a special preparation which she puts in the *anus* of the patient. Next she moistens her fingers with oil and puts them a second time into the *rectum* (*mustaḳīm*) until when she has succeeded in mixing the oil with the first special prepartion, she draws out her hand, which has become smeared with coagulated blood, resulting from the morbid local inflammation. As a result the wretched patient thinks that these bloody lumps are the piles, and so it is noised abroad in the mouths of the populace of that village and those adjoining it, that such a woman tears out piles by the roots, pulling them out in her hand like the liver of fowls.

Sometimes the patient finds relief for a day or two after this "operation" because, for one thing, the oil softens the local inflammation referred to above, and, for another thing, the woman by inserting her hand into the *anus* sets up an expansion of the sphincter (*'āṣira*). So the patient for these two reasons finds a slight relief from suffering. But this method is obviously fraught with injury, especially if the reader knows that the source of the dysentery is in the germs which the "doctress" carries and with which she infects the patient.

I once heard a government official say that being afflicted 759
with piles, he was recommended to a man called the Shaikh Aḥmad al-Khaṭṭābī in [p. 19] the Khurunfish district of Cairo who was famous for the treatment of this disease. The latter treated him for three weeks, at the end of which the trouble and the pain ceased. I bethought myself of coming face to face with this man, in order to make his acquaintance and derive benefit from him. In fact, I went to him three times on three successive days and entreated him both for myself and for many of his companions, that he might enlighten me about the secret of the medicine, and take me as one of his pupils. To this he consented, but only after he had put me on 757
my oath that I would not divulge his secret to any doctor or layman; besides (he added) if I did reveal it to anyone, it would lose all its virtue and be useless. Thereupon he brought out a

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

Orientals as the people of India, China, the Hedjaz, Persia, and Dongola, and even the Berbers who have depended on his favours from ancient times even to the present day. So that you see him [i.e. the Egyptian] although he is a native of the land and its rightful owner, living only from hand to mouth in spite of his many endeavours to better himself.

The same may be said about the Egyptian physician because "*the singer of the tribe does not charm.*"[1] He is lower in rank than any foreigner, even if he be distinguished for skill and dexterity in his profession, whereas his foreign colleague may be distinguished for stupidity and ignorance. Anyone who considers the truth of the matter can be certain that our native patients glory in their illness when they can say, "Our doctor is Monsieur so and so, possessed of such a certificate from the High School of Paris," or, that he is Mr. or Signor such and such, although the patient in the majority of cases does not know anything of the circumstances of his physician, whether [p. 58] he be French or English, for example, or Italian. And the fact is, if we try to excuse him because of the justifiable reputation of Europe, we cannot do so when he resorts to the Moor Sīdī al-Ḥagg al-Tlimsānī, or Shaikh 'Amr al-Rūḥānī, or Sīdī Muḥammad al-Sūdānī, or others who deceive and ensnare simpletons. The reason is that their country is without adequate medical schools, so where can they learn medicine?

I beseech the reader to be patient while I relate to him an event which happened last year. While I was sitting one day with some colleagues in a certain place, some people entered whom we knew, accompanied by a Shaikh in the garb of the Hedjaz (full-sleeved gown, *kisā*, and "hunchbacked" turban). He was introduced to us as Shaikh Manān ibn 'Abd al-Manāf, and that he was a physician who "cured" every ailment. We received him with the utmost respect and reverence, and made room for him in the highest place. Then when we opened a discussion, he began to inform us of strange "cures." He soon began to rave in his talk and to beat about like a blind she-camel in a pitch-dark night, so that he imagined, I perceived, that none of those in front of him had any acquaintance with

[1] [A quotation from *Ibn al-Jauzī* (12th Cent.). A prophet is not acceptable in his own country. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

the *Dawwād* ("*worm-extractor*") to "cure" him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wshed to witness his "operation" myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the "operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight.'[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to "worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The "operaton" is as follows: The "doctress" in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this "operation"; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the "treatment" of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a "cure" will be found in Miss Blackman *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]
[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MR9

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counsels. And they are not to be deceived by the fact that certain men of science in Europe have recently arisen in support of the methods of "curing" possessed by the Ghagar and by the "old wives." It will not be long before they reverse their opinion.

XXXV

THE FARGĀN (TRIBE) AND HYDROPHOBIA (KALAB)

L 831 164

It is well-known that the Bedouin and Arabs who dwell in the deserts and wildernesses, are harmed by their employing dogs as protectors and friends, and making them serve as guardians and watchers over their lives and possessions. Because of the wide-spread use of these animals amongst them, the chances of being bitten by them have increased.

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They "cure" such by means of cauterization with a heated iron, whether the person be afflicted with real hydrophobia or not, as is often the case.

It is firmly rooted in popular belief to-day that there is no escape from the evil consequences of a bite except "treatment" by this method at the hand of the *Fargān*, a small group of the Aulād 'Alī tribe,[1] who call themselves Marabouts (*murābiṭīn*). You see those who are bitten by dogs going repeatedly unto them, and seeking them out from all parts of the country and the farthest horizons, to obtain healing and relief from the distress of the disease. As for the above-mentioned "method," it consists of heating a piece of iron in the fire until it reaches the stage of being red-hot. Then the *Fargān* take it and severely burn the wound with it. And one of the observations which the patient must follow is to remain in a darkened room for the space of fifty days, during which he must not approach his wife. Otherwise the benefit [p. 71] expected from the "treatment" ceases.

[1] [Desert Arabs. See P. Kahle: *Die Aulad-'Ali-Beduinen der Libyschen Wüste*, in *Der Islam*, IV (1913), pp. 355–386. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

XLVII

MUFATTÁḲA[1]

THE "old wives" make this out of a collection of materials whose number to their statement, reaches forty kinds, the bulk of it of oily fruits. The fat of black beetles is reported to be necessary to the completion of its ingredients. It appears from its composition that it is hard to digest and of an injurious nature. It causes turbidness of digestion and diarrhœa. So it is more harmful than the "bead" of the cow [see above]. But the "old wives" have other compounds besides this, such as "the Seven grains" (سبع حبوب) [see illustration in Miss Blackman, op. cit. p. 79] and "orange jelly" (سطيح قلقاس).

XLVIII

ECZEMA (ṢAFRA)

THIS is a name used generally in the provinces for many skin diseases which are a sort of eczema (*Ḳūb*), and especially for the disease called psoriasis. (I mean the "pearly' variety, because it has scabs shining like mother of pearl). Those afflicted with this disease go to Shaikh Farag Abū Maḥmūd of Munāshela in the district of Shubrakhīt in the Province of Buḥaira. He cauterizes them upon the metatarsus of their feet opposite the tops of the three last toes, and orders them not to go near water for forty days. The strange thing is that this condition does not suit the Fellāḥ whose food comes from sowing [p. 93] especially while he is barefooted. Then how should he not be wet when he is continually immersed?

[1] [This is a kind of sweetmeat or *ḥalāwa*, made of molasses. I had the opportunity given me of tasting it once. If its dark oily appearance does not repel, its taste does. I can understand now after seeing its colour why the rumour goes that it is made from the flesh of black beetles, as the author states. TR.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Middle East-Arabic Period-M3 Egypt MR1

demolished the religion of his people, and affirmed that religions were false. He was busily engaged in the other parts of his life with the particularities of names, and magic and astrology and the alchemy of gold. I mean by him the famous Voltaire. So why do we ignore these and say: "We Easterners were, and do not cease to be, in a manifest error?" In general we find in Egypt many worthless persons, who have no work, addicted to the worship of some leaves which they deem to be treasures of great value (but their value is but madness, if they only knew it). You see them bringing numerous substances to produce the concoction, and keep on kindling fires under it until it all flies off in smoke. Then, when they do not find anything except a little dust inside the crucible, they think that they have made a mistake, so they begin the work again and again, and so on till their cash is lost, and their lives are like scattered dust. And while their money is coming to an end they are pouncing upon the ignorant with their imbecility, and they waste the remainder of their substance as the Treasure Diviners [see above] have done. This evil is found in cities more than in villages. I know many of the well-known families in Cairo, whose wealth was brought to an end through "the extraction of gold."

LIII

DECEIT UNDER THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION

[p. 104.] We now come to the laxity and forgery that are blended with the medicine of to-day, and what makes it fanciful or seemingly so, just as we mentioned the description of the men and women of the Past. Therefore, we say that there is no doubt that the sciences have advanced to-day since yesterday. Let us leave aside the distant past to be judged by the future. We do not know in which of the two science advanced more. A great number of intelligent people hold the opinion that time was when the sciences were more advanced than to-day.

The truth is that most of the works of mankind to-day

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Egypt MR1

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proclaim that those holding this opinion are right without a mistake. Those who consider the doctors of the present generation, whose opinions clash and whose views disagree and whose drugs differ, are bewildered and know not which of them is right and which of them is mistaken. The person who considers the book which is printed in all languages as a commentary on the Elixir of Judenau (?) (جودنو) and sees that it cures all incurable illnesses in a short space, and who uses the "cure" for years and does not obtain the slightest advantage, becomes in his distress enraged against physic and physicians. Every invalid who turns the pages of this bulky book repeats what is written, viz., "By the use of six glasses of this Elixir the invalid will be cured of pulmonary consumption." Afterwards his glance falls upon an article as follows: "The Journal *France Moderne* reports: 'All the medical sciences acknowledge that this Elixir cures all heart diseases, meningitic inflammation, and diseases of the arteries and decay of the bones,' to which it adds a rider: 'It prolongs life when used in a suitable way.' (The patient) has recourse to this elixir which he does not cease to use [p. 105] while the malady increases in strength, and its course is swift, until he dies a natural death, and then he learns the truth that these statements are false.

We were astonished at the person who came to Egypt during the past year and began announcing in the public streets to the effect that the medicine of "*Sīkwā*" (سيكوا) was the only cure for deafness, blindness, rickets, consumption, piles, and all incurable illnesses. It is obvious to anyone watching that person seated in a carriage embellished with gold, adorned with mirrors, drawn by a pair of fleet horses and surrounded by a band of musicians, while he himself is proclaiming that the famous *Sīkwā* is leaving Egypt on the morrow, that Galen was risen from the grave, and that this was a suitable chance of gaining possession of his remedy.

Doubtless intelligent people were not deceived by the like of these profitless manifestations. But the strangest of them is what we see printed in the columns of our local journals under the name *Salwar* (or *Salūr*) (سلور), whose beneficial pills are well known as a "cure" for many illnesses.

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

But the chief marvel of his shrewdness was when he heard about the belief of the Egyptians in empirics, and sent them pills to cure them, and began proposing to them things which, if they abstained from them, would alone be sufficient to restore their health. He prescribes bathing in cold water every morning and abstaining completely from drinking or smoking as well as the eating of food half cooked, although if every sick person considered these things he would not need the "cure" of "His Excellency the Servant of Humanity." Those who know science, or who study medicine, wonder exceedingly at the ignorance of teachers and authors who assert: "They (i.e. the doctors) are unable to cure many diseases. They submit to the judgment of their inability to overcome diseases when the *Elixir of* [p. 106] *Judenau* and the drink of *Sīkwā* and the pills of *Salwar* cure all."

You also see European Pharmacies, especially, and drug-stores, filled with compounds prepared in Europe—"specialities"—for "curing" those sick of such and such an infirmity after so many days' use. If they were genuine then what would be the advantage to invalids in crying out for doctors to pursue medical research? All they would have to do would be to resort to these compounds and dispense with all else.

The patient with any chest trouble, for example, would simply use *Īrīz Pills* (حبوب ايرز) which, they say, cure all chest disorders.

The patient troubled with V.D., for example, would resort to the *Drink Jibīr* (جبير). It is said to stop all turns, in spite of their different character.

Now are these people really serving mankind by means of their remedies, or are these matters quite devoid of truth, or are they intended for another purpose?

In fact, they are only the errors of swindlers or the snares of those to whom we can commonly apply the name of lawful thieves, a clique who appear in the midst of the throng and the struggle for life and are reduced in spite of themselves to obtaining riches and wealth from any source, provided there is no law to restrain them and no one to prevent them. This is the rule of the new civilization and the modern manner of life.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *ḥashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khadra* and her colleagues used *ḥashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbīya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāḥ*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shisha*.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

"cure" all, namely, to segregate them for forty-one days in a room darkened and tightly locked, without feeding them during their stay there except with thin bread and molasses (lit. black honey). This woman comes to visit them every morning only, and performs on them the "cure" by a wonderful system. If any of them experiences a violent pain she makes for her a ring or two for her temple or her neck, or else she cauterizes her with iron rings in the foregoing places.

Women come to her to be "treated" for complete "adhesive" obscurations, or retinal inflammation, or atrophy of the visual nerve, or any other of the grievous diseases all of which the woman (quack) characterizes by the name of "blindness." She begins by administering to them a drop of the juice of an onion for one week. In the second week she makes for them a collyrium of ginger (of equal parts of sugar-candy and ginger). [p. 13.] In the remaining three weeks she drops in their eyes a drop composed of dew which has fallen overnight upon the leaves of the Persian cane (or bamboo), mixed with the powder of burnt bones of crows.

In the Gharbîya province, in a village called *Kafr Khidr*, about a quarter of an hour distant from *Ṭanṭā*, there is a man who lays claim to a medicine for the eyes. He has harmed thousands of God's creatures, because his "method" is quicker in damaging than the previous one. He is prone to make surgical operations on all who seek him out, whatever the disease may be. One of my medical friends told me (as follows): I visited the man one day when he had just begun to perform an operation. He split the cornea with a broad knife, and all the moistures of the eye flowed out, and in a word, there were cast out with them the iris and the internal covers. The man, however, did not become confused, but bound up the eye of the patient, and said to him, "Now you will go home and sleep upon your back without moving in the least or speaking a word during three days. If you do not do that then I am not responsible for your eye, if anything happens to it." My friend said, I was sorry for this poor fellow, but I checked myself, and said that it was not necessary to grieve for the loss of sight when Allah has blinded insight.

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

III

RHEUMATISM AND DONKEY MARROW

ONE of the ancient "prescriptions" successfully used for *Ḥidār* of the joints (i.e. rheumatism) is taking the marrow from the feet of a dead donkey and rubbing it on the part affected for seven days. They go to extremes in the matter until the patient is compelled to bring it from remote regions, after his family have set spies and observers in all the villages to inform them of the death of a donkey, male or female. Sometimes they employ the fat of a camel or serpent.

The true explanation. It is possible that in the spinal substance of the donkey's bone there may be a soothing element, which the learned have not yet discovered. But it is very improbable that there is an element counteracting or removing inflammation, since a patient told me that that marrow is not exciting or burning, but that it is like ordinary fat. Perhaps it may here have some effect on muscular rheumatism, but in [p. 15] the case of rheumatism of the joints it is of little use.

IV

THE UNIQUE ELEMENT (AL-GŌHAR AL-FARD)

THOSE who go back to what we wrote in the first part (page 24) concerning piles and dysentery (*rīḥ al-mash'ūmāt*) will know the secret of those fancies in the villages. But today the crowds of quacks are not satisfied with propagating their errors in the villages, but they go so far as to publish the same in the newspapers. I read in an Arabic newspaper an advertisement by a man called Abū 'Ujaiza of the village of Fīsha, residing in the dwelling of Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl in Ṭanṭā. He "cures" piles in the space of three days, at least,

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

so he says. May Allah forgive him, or Khawāja Khalīl Kamāl his dupe, for publishing his "craft," as we have heard that he agreed with him to divide the profits. By my life, if he were able to cure them in the space of three days he would enrich the world, not only in Egypt but in Europe and America. Then it would be fitting to name this medicine of his "The Unique Element," but [p. 16] we do not think his medicine differs from that of Shaikh Aḥmad Al-Khaṭṭābī (May Allah pity him!). At least it does not surpass the astringents and sedatives which have an effect on these hæmorrhoidal tumours, nor does it ease their pain or reduce their size.

But what shall we say to Abū 'Ujaiza, who proclaims in the newspapers—assisted by the liberty given to science to advertise without opposition—that his medicament "cures" piles in three days? We consider nothing more fitting than the arrest of such a man so that he may either prove his veracity and be rewarded, or else show his mendacity and receive his deserts.

V

THE CHARM FOR THE ENVIED

In all successful occasions of "Envy"—compare Part I page 78—the "old wife" is called on to use the *Raḳwa* (or charm), but not every "old wife" is able to do so. Only some of them, among those skilled in the art of "doctoring" can do so. When she comes she orders alum (?)[1] and *fasūkh*, both of which are thrown upon a blazing fire. Then she places the incense with her hand on the head of the patient ("the Envied One") and says:

"The first in the name of Allah; the second in the name of Allah; the third [p. 17] in the name of Allah; the fourth in the name of Allah; the fifth in the name of Allah; the sixth in the name of Allah; the seventh, there is no power or strength

[1] [The Arabic text has *ghabah*, which seems a mistake for *Shabb*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 EGYPT MR1

imitating each other. Because corns result from the pressure of tight shoes upon the toes. They "cure" it by placing a piece of tomato upon it, and leaving it for three hours. Then it ceases.

XVI

IN THE VICINITY OF THE BĀB ZUWAILA[1]

In front of the Bāb Zuwaila, named the Bāb al-Mutawallī, there is a man who sells *kunāfa*[2] too renowned to be forgotten by the consumers of this article. My Professor, Muḥammad Bey Durrī told me about him that he "cures" all kinds of eczema (*ḳūba*) and especially what particularizes the varieties of *karfa* (see p. 68). He had, he told me, a little maid-servant afflicted with this ailment. He directed her to the proper treatment, but an "old wife" took her off with her to that man without his knowledge. The result was good, for she was "cured."

The true explanation. This man employs certain ointments doubly compounded, and since their success is assured he does not abandon the means by enquiring too closely concerning it. We are aware that crowds in the provinces are renowned for this and are called *Ḥāwīyīn* (or snake-charmers) since they recite certain words over a glass containing olive-oil and the yolk of an egg and spit into it. And here is the importance of the slimy mixture composed [p. 32] of the two substances above-mentioned, since by it the effect of outside influences is prevented.

Near to that in effect is the juice exuding from the sycamore (which is called "the milk of the sycamore," *leben al-gummaiz*). It is famous among the *fellāḥīn* for the "cure" of different kinds of skin-diseases.

[1] [One of the famous old city-gates of Cairo, also called the *Bāb al-Mutawallī* because a very holy Shaikh of that name is supposed to appear there sometimes. Numerous relics of hair, rags and teeth are suspended from its nails by the superstitious folk who hope for a "cure" or a blessing thereby. Tr.]

[2] [i.e. sweet vermicelli. Tr.]

164 season. The "old wives" "prescribe" for them the white of
eggs mixed with spirit of tutty, or *tūtiyā khalīlī* (oxide of zinc
and cadmium and their sulphates). As a result the eye will be
"cured" with marvellous rapidity.

The true explanation. The "old wives" pretend that this tutty has a hidden power in attracting the redness of the eye and sucking it up completely. The truth of the matter is that the majority of the eyes which they diagnose as "split" are affected with chronic granular ophthalmia. They are affected by sharp twinges caused by congestion. [p. 42.] Indeed the spirit of tutty does influence temporarily, and that is on account of its arresting the inflamed vessels whereby the eye becomes clear. But it lasts only for a little, until the malady returns with greater force.

The true treatment. There are special remedies for it, and certain operations. Let the patient, however, in these circumstances consult eye-specialists on account of the danger of this serious malady.

XXV

ḤASAN AGHĀ IN DAMANHŪR

HASAN AGHĀ, above-mentioned, is famous for the "cure" of stone, and extracting it from the urinary bladder. His reputation is widespread, and patients resort to him from all quarters. (And not only those suffering from stone but from any illness in the bladder of uncertain symptoms.) He has an agency in Damanhūr which he has made like a hospital for his numerous patients. His method is to begin by bringing a large plate full of hot water, in which he seats the patient for a little. Then he inserts two fingers of his left hand inside the man's rectum and slips between them a knife with which he wounds the patient's vitals. The blood flows in torrents. Sometimes the patient faints when he sees the blood; sometimes he screams asking for relief. Then our clever quack

/80 cont'd/

Nowadays there are some women who perform the Zar-ceremony (1) merely for fun or with the aim to get money or presents from their friends and relations. (2) 755 789

2. The Kūdiya or Shaikha:

In most cases the Kūdiya is a woman, rarely a man. Kūdiya with dark complexions are preferred, because it is believed that the most clever Kūdiya are Sudanese. In our terminology the Kūdiya may be described as the medium between the possessed person and the spirits. By her knowledge and ability, which will be described later, she is able to designate the spirit or /81/ spirits who entered the patient's body. A specially favourable day for the soothing of the spirit is fixed and special offerings made. The amulets (Arabic: Hegab, pl. ahgeba) and the clothes the patient must wear during the ceremony are determined. From the day the Kūdiya is called by the patient until the day of the ceremony she supervises every step taken in this respect. She has connection with the black-and goldsmiths and with the El-'Attar (plant and drug-dealer). 791 756 [787] 791 755 [777] [751] [324] [759]

The Kūdiya herself is supposed to be possessed by all kinds of spirits and she wears all respective amulets. Once every year she performs a big ceremony for all these spirits. It takes place in the month of Ragab and is the closing ceremony of the year. During the following two holy months of Islam Shaban and Ramadan no Zar-ceremony may be performed. Apart from the big annual ceremony, she makes a small Zar approximately twice weekly as treatment for her patients. 791 [787] [751] [796] [755]

The Kūdiya's position is hereditary; if she has no daughter to succeed her, the post will be passed on to one of her assistants. [428]

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(1) It is mostly uncultured rich women who do this for fun and spend a great deal of money on it.

(2) The social usage obliges a woman even nowadays in Egypt to give presents or money (called: No q tan) to her relatives or friends on the occasion of marriage-, birth-or Zar-ceremonies. They, in turn, are obliged to repay her if she performs any such ceremonies. [431] [585] [846] [787]